

indeed, he had been distracted by the clamour of Asians and Athanasians, and his was a mind upon which a clever and acute ecclesiastic, who enjoyed his confidence, could play at will. When Hosius of Cordova stood by his side he was the champion of the Catholic party; when Hosius fell from favour and Eusebius of Nieomedia took his place Constantino strongly inclined to the Anna side. But in neither case was there any doubt of his Christianity. Why then did he not become a member of the Church? Was it because the rite of baptism conferred immediate forgiveness of sin and therefore a death-bed baptism infallibly opened the gate of Heaven? By putting off entrance into the Church until the hour had come after which it was hardly possible to commit sin, did Constantino count upon making sure of eternal happiness? Such is the motive assigned by some historians. It certainly is not a lofty one. Yet the idea may very well have presented itself to Constantino's mind and the impression left by Eusebius's narrative is that Constantine only determined to receive the rite because he felt his end to be near and dared not put it off any longer. On the other hand, Constantino's statement that his ambition had been to be baptised in Jordan is rather against this theory. Possibly,

too, he was to some influenced by the
wish
not to alienate 'entirely the support of
liin pagan
subjects, especially the fanatical of them,
who
would bitterly resent their Chief Pontiff
becoming a baptised member of the
Christian Church. No one can say, but
we shall be the better able to form an